

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 14037

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PFOR, VN, VS

SUBJECT: LE DUC THO TV INTERVIEW

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY: HANOI TV REPEAT TV CARRIED AN AUGUST 1 INTERVIEW WITH POLITBURO MEMBER LE DUC THO IN WHICH THE LATTER REVIEWED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JUNE 13 JOINT COMMUNIQUE. THO PAINTED THE USUAL GLOWING PICTURE OF COMMUNIST STRENGTH AND GVN WEAKNESS IN THE SOUTH AND REITERATED STANDARD COMMUNIST CHARGES OF US/GVN VIOLATIONS, WITHOUT, HOWEVER, HINTING AT RESUMED MILITARY OPERATIONS TO REDRESS THE ALLEGED WRONGS. IN ADDITION THO PROVIDED A BIT MORE DETAIL ON THE JEC TALKS IN PARIS. END SUMMARY

2. ON AUGUST 2 RADIO HANOI BROADCAST THE TEXT OF WHAT IT SAID WAS A TELEVISION INTERVIEW GRANTED BY LE DUC THO ON AUGUST 1 TO THE HANOI TV STATION. THIS IS THE FIRST KNOWN INSTANCE A HIGH PARTY LEADER HAS MADE HIMSELF AVAILABLE TO THE DRV'S FLEDGLING TV ORGANIZATION AND IS ONE OF THE RARE OCCASIONS ON WHICH A LEADING DRV FIGURE HAS GRANTED A "LIVE" INTERVIEW TO DOMESTIC MEDIA.

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2. THO BEGAN THE SESSION WITH A STANDARD DESCRIPTION OF THE

JUNE 13 JOINT COMMUNIQUE AS A "NEW AND IMPORTANT VICTORY OF OUR PEOPLE." HE RECALLED THAT HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH DR. KISSINGER HAD TAKEN PLACE AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF "DIFFICULTIES" IN LAOS AND, IN PARTICULAR, CAMBODIA AND AT A TIME WHEN THERE WERE "MANY" ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN THE US ITSELF. THO CLAIMED THAT THE COMMUNIQUE "HAS HAD A GREAT IMPACT ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTH VIET-NAM", WHERE ALL "OUR COMPATRIOTS" HAVE "ENTHUSIASTICALLY PLACED THEIR CONFIDENCE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR SERIOUS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT." THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNIST STRATEGY IS DEMONSTRATED, ACCORDING TO THO, BY INCREASING DISSATISFACTION AND DIVISION IN GVN RANKS, BY ACCOMMODATION BETWEEN RVNAF AND VIET CONG MILITARY UNITS, AND BY INCREASED DESERTION IN RVNAF UNITS. (COMMENT: THIS HIGH LEVEL RESTATEMENT OF HANOI'S BASIC INTENT TO PURSUE POLITICAL AS OPPOSED TO MILITARY STRUGGLE COULD WELL BE AIMED AT THOSE CADRE, PARTICULARLY IN THE SOUTH, WHO ARE DEMORALIZED BY THE COMMUNISTS' INABILITY THUS FAR TO MAKE POLITICAL INROADS AND WHO MIGHT PREFER A RESUMPTION OF LARGE-SCALE HOSTILITIES OVER A CONTINUATION OF PRESENT STRATEGY.)

3. THO STATED THAT THE US AND GVN HAD BEEN COMPELLED TO OBSERVE CERTAIN PROVISION OF THE AGREEMENT BUT HAD VIOLATED MANY IMPORTANT PROVISIONS IN A "VERY CRITICAL MANNER." THE US, BECAUSE OF ITS FAILURE TO REMOVE MINES ALREADY DEACTIVATED AND TO SUPPLY APPROPRIATE MEANS TO THE DRV FOR SWEEPING INLAND WATERWAYS, HAS "NOT YET ADEQUATELY FULFILLED ITS OBLIGATIONS" CONCERNING MINE-CLEARING OPERATIONS. WITH RESPECT TO THE JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION FORMED UNDER ARTICLE 21 OF THE AGREEMENT, THO CHARGED THAT THE US HAD LINKED SIGNING AGREEMENTS ON A "FIVE YEAR PLAN" AND US CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DRV DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF THAT PLAN TO COMMUNIST IMPLEMENTATION OF OTHER PROVISIONS OF THE AGREEMENT "IN AN EXTREMELY ILLOGICAL MANNER." (COMMENT: HANOI HAD REPORTED EARLIER THAT AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED IN THE JEC ON SOME QUESTIONS RELATED TO POST-WAR US AID TO THE DRV BUT THAT SIGNING OF THE DOCUMENTS HAD BEEN DELAYED BECAUSE THE US HAD "DELIBERATELY" CREATED DIFFICULTIES. THUS, THO DISCLOSED FOR THE FIRST TIME THE VAGUE OUTLINE OF THE AGREEMENTS HANOI CLAIMS HAVE BEEN REACHED AS WELL AS THE FACT THAT IT IS US DISSATISFACTION WITH COMMUNIST BEHAVIOR THAT HAS DELAYED THEIR SIGNING. END COMMENT.)

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4. REGARDING THE MILITARY SITUATION IN THE SOUTH, THO ADMITTED THAT THE INTENSITY OF FIGHTING "HAS DROPPED VERY CONSIDERABLY COMPARED TO BEFORE THE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT." SUCH A STATEMENT IS EXTREMELY RARE, IF NOT UNPRECEDENTED, FROM A COMMUNIST SPOKESMAN. THO DID, HOWEVER, QUALIFY IT BY ACCUSING RVNAF OF CONDUCTING "MAJOR ATTACKS" IN KONTUM AND CHUONG THIEN. HE ALSO ROUTINELY CONDEMNED GVN SUPPRESSION

OF "DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES" AND ALLEGED MISTREATMENT OF
"POLITICAL PRISONERS."

5. CLOSING ON THE UPBEAT, THO EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT
BY HEIGHTENING VIGILANCE AND BY STRUGGLING TO FORCE THE
ADVERSARY TO OBSERVE THE AGREEMENT THE COMMUNISTS WOULD
"CERTAINLY ACHIEVE VICTORY."
MARTIN

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